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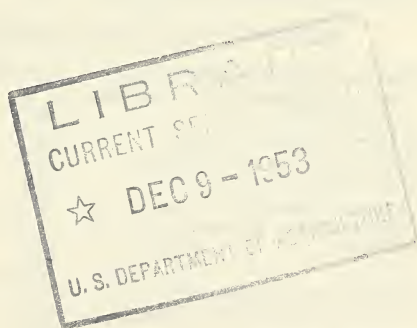
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Report of

THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

1953



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Report of the Director of Personnel, 1953

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL,
Washington, D. C., October 1, 1953.

HON. EZRA TAFT BENSON,
Secretary of Agriculture.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I respectfully submit the following report on personnel administration in the Department of Agriculture. The period covered is the fiscal year 1953—July 1, 1952, through June 30, 1953.

Sincerely yours,

T. ROY REID,
Director.

Introduction

The fiscal year recently completed has been one of realignment, readjustment, and reexamination of the Department's program of personnel administration.

As a result of an administrative regrouping of the agencies of the Department and congressional approval of Reorganization Plan No. 2, 1953, the Office of Personnel now reports to the Secretary through the Administrative Assistant Secretary. Other agencies in the Departmental Administrative Group are the Office of Hearing Examiners, the Library, the Office of Budget and Finance, the Office of Information, and the Office of Plant and Operations.

A similar regrouping of agencies with like programs to administer has brought together those agencies concerned with research, extension, and land use into one group; those concerned with commodity marketing and adjustment into another group; and the three credit agencies into yet another. Each of the groups mentioned, with the exception of the credit group, is headed by an assistant secretary as is the Foreign Agricultural Service which, together with the Office of the Solicitor, stands separately. The new position of the Office of Personnel, together with the overall realignment of the Department, has necessitated the establishment of new working relationships, new policy determinations, and new lines of internal and external communication.

New procedures in connection with the recently established security program, which by Executive order replaced the former loyalty program, were established toward the end of the year. Since that time, positions designated as "sensitive" can be filled or occupied only by persons who have undergone a full field investigation. The Division of Investigations of the Office of Personnel has been given many added responsibilities in regard to this program, in addition to the

custodial, clerical, and liaison functions which it will continue to perform.

From February 5 through the end of the fiscal year, machinery was in operation in the Office of Personnel for clearing agency requests to fill vacancies. This procedure implemented instructions from the Director of the Budget and the Secretary requiring prior approval by the latter in order to fill vacancies from outside the Department. The virtual freeze on new employment throughout the Department resulted in a reduction in personnel through attrition. This policy continues, although its administration has now been transferred to the agency level.

During the last half of the fiscal year congressional committees and the Civil Service Commission sent many requests for extensive reports pertaining to personnel administration and its possible improvement. One of these required the listing of all positions in the excepted service (not under civil service) by specific location and salary rates; another called for a detailed compilation of personnel activities throughout the Department with our recommendations for certain improvements; still another requested the Department's suggestions on the role of the Civil Service Commission in Federal personnel administration. Implementation of the many findings and suggestions contained in these studies will be a long-range proposition. However, the subject matter covered is an excellent indication of the interest being shown in furthering the development of sound policies of personnel administration and management.

The annual departmentwide inspection of personnel activities conducted by representatives of the Civil Service Commission in the spring of 1953 revealed an unusually high degree of compliance with the Commission's regulations and instructions for taking personnel actions under delegated authority. The Department was especially commended on its many good practices and the helpful management publications used in its personnel operations.

At the agency level, shifts in some program activities, new emphasis on others, and the abolishment of still others were accomplished with a minimum of confusion as they affected personnel in general. In addition to the departmentwide administrative regrouping mentioned previously, the important agency changes included the elevation in status of the Foreign Agricultural Service, the separation of the Agricultural Conservation Program from the Production and Marketing Administration, the transfer of soil survey activities from the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils and Agricultural Engineering to the Soil Conservation Service and the transfer of research functions in this area to the former.

Recruitment of personnel with scarce skills continued to be one of the outstanding problems with which the agencies had to contend during the past year. The Rural Electrification Administration solved the problem in the engineering field by reassigning 51 engineers experienced in the electric program to the greatly accelerated telephone program. The Bureau of Animal Industry undertook to recruit and retain sufficient veterinary personnel by working out an agreement with the Civil Service Commission whereby this scarce category of employee will be recruited at the GS-7 trainee level and, after a short orientation period, will be promoted to GS-9.

Activities in 1953

Employee Performance and Development

Orientation

Agencies have been especially urged to improve their methods and techniques of orienting employees during the past year. This Office believes that when a new employee—or an old one—is fully informed about the work of his own and related agencies, he will serve the public in a more effective and courteous manner.

A revised edition of the Department's Employee Handbook was prepared and agencies in the Department ordered 28,000 copies. This Handbook is distributed to new employees to help them understand the work of the Department and their responsibilities and privileges as employees. Some agencies, like the Farmers Home Administration, prepare agency supplements to the Department Handbook in order to present additional material.

Agency orientation meetings, such as that held by Soil Conservation Service last spring for field training officers, are effective and are encouraged. Many agencies have developed worthwhile orientation materials and special effort will be made during the year ahead to assist agencies in making further improvements in their programs. This office also contemplates resuming the departmentwide orientation meetings for employees in Washington to provide examples for agencies to follow in conducting their own orientation work.

Development of Supervisors

The use and maintenance of constructive selection, supervisory appraisal, and development programs are being continually stimulated. Some results of human relations research were brought to the attention of supervisors, with suggested ways of using the results to create congenial work groups and to stimulate individual workers to use initiative in solving their problems.

Additional program material was developed for the looseleaf manual Guide Posts for Supervisors. This included definitions of, and check list for, a positive public relations program covering 20 areas pertinent to Government operations and a 40-step method for planning training programs. In order to stimulate continued and widespread use of Guide Posts for Supervisors, a detailed analysis of the contents was given wide distribution. Because 10 percent of the recommendations coming from the past five Biennial Personnel Management meetings had a bearing on supervision, these recommendations were identified with the pertinent material in Guide Posts, to show that the handbook was in line with confirmed opinions of what is desirable and necessary to maintain a first-rate supervisory force in the Department.

Through the medium of Guide Posts, repeated efforts are being made to place in the hands of operating people definitions of needed skills, practical techniques, and factual working knowledge which every supervisor can use and with which he should be acquainted. We are attempting to personalize this workbook so that supervisors will acquire the habit of using it as a handy reference, a guide for further study, and a stimulus to self-improvement. Region 2 of the Soil Conservation Service is doing a particularly fine job of integrating Guide Posts with its program operations on a continuous year-round basis. The Forest Service is incorporating into its inspection system a direct technique for evaluating the proficiency with which forest supervisors handle and develop career workers.

We are encouraging a variety of methods for the use of "Guide Posts" based on supervisory conditions in the Department. Efforts have been concentrated on furnishing principles, standards, evaluation techniques, guides, outlines, suggestions, stimulation, the creation of environment conducive to improved morale and efficiency, and the creation of a desire for self-improvement on the part of individuals. Slanting the material toward any particular Department program has been avoided so that what we furnish in the way of staff assistance has departmentwide applicability. We have been assured that this is responsible for the widespread acceptance of Guide Posts for Supervisors; we believe it accounts for the interest in taking basic material and molding it to an "agency personality." This meets our objective and we believe it provides a basic means for progress toward more efficient management.

Training in Administrative Management

The Secretary's Committee on Training in Administrative Management continued its active leadership of this inservice training program which is aimed at high-level employees responsible for the improvement of administration. Employees who show aptitude and promise in the field of administrative management are selected by their agencies to attend training institutes. Later, they are expected to work with agency heads in their local areas in planning and carrying out local administrative management workshops.

To date, 57 leaders from 29 headquarter cities have been trained at 2 such institutes—1 in the western half of the United States and 1 in the East. The first institute was held in April 1951 and the second in December 1952. Plans are being made by the Secretary's TAM Committee to sponsor a third institute during the coming year to develop leaders in additional headquarter cities.

Two local TAM workshops for field administrators were held last year, making a total of six thus far. These workshops were arranged by local agency heads working with the local leaders trained at the institutes. Assistance is given by the Office of Personnel as needed. Twenty or more workshops are currently being planned by local agency heads in as many headquarter locations throughout the country.

Training Seminar

The monthly Training Seminar was used throughout the year for the purpose of exchanging training ideas and experiences. Some of

the seminars involved discussions of methods of: Identifying training needs; coordinating training; keeping operating officers advised on proved training methods and techniques; developing awareness of the need for self-improvement and employee training on the part of supervisors; exchanging ideas and information within the agencies.

Other seminars were devoted to actual demonstrations of techniques and methods such as demonstrations of: Agency group receiving supervisory and executive development training; panel of interns discussing the system; agency representative's handling of a trainee assigned to him; agency personnel officer's job of advising trainees; use of training films; use of performance standards in developing workers.

In addition the seminar heard reports on various agencies' programs such as: The results of field tryouts of methods to determine the quality of supervision; the objectives of the executive development program of the Civil Service Commission; and the use of opinion surveys. Agencies were encouraged to present their training problems for group discussion and assistance.

We use the Training Seminar to provide an economical and practical means for improvement of training programs and the evaluation of new methods and techniques because our staff is not sufficient to deal effectively with individual agencies on a personalized basis.

Training for Government Service

The Joint Land-Grant College Department Committee on Training for Government Service continues to provide an additional opportunity for working with the land-grant colleges. It met twice during the past year and made 28 recommendations to improve the quality of employees recruited from the colleges. Emphasis will be given during the year ahead to implement these recommendations and to develop further cooperation between the land-grant colleges and the Department so that outstanding recruits will continue to be available.

A special case study is being undertaken by three college members of this Committee at their institutions to determine the extent and availability of training provided employees on joint Federal-State cooperative projects. Results of the study will influence the approach to be used in encouraging an expansion of similar training on all joint Department-State cooperative projects.

Performance Requirements and Ratings

The Performance Rating Act of 1950 specifically requires "* * * that proper performance requirements be made known to all officers and employees;" and further, "* * * that performance be fairly appraised in relation to such requirements." The Department complies with these and the other requirements of the law under a plan approved by the Civil Service Commission.

Written statements of performance requirements have been prepared for all employees in the Farmers Home Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, the Forest Service, the Library, the Rural Electrification Administration, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Office of Personnel, and for a substantial proportion of the employees in the other agencies of the Department. To be useful, per-

formance requirements must be revised from time to time because of new work and changes in duties and working conditions. In promoting the development and use of performance requirements, the Office of Personnel stresses the importance of making such standards an integral part of the total management program of each agency. So far as is practicable, systems of work measurement and performance standards should be devised for use in work planning, determination of personnel requirements, preparation of budget estimates, evaluation of efficiency, and day-to-day supervision and training of employees.

All agencies have now had considerable experience in rating under the new system. In general, the system is found to be satisfactory. The most frequent suggestions for change are to: (1) Add another level of rating between "Outstanding" and "Satisfactory;" and, (2) modify the legal definition of "Outstanding," so that it is not so extremely difficult of attainment. A total of 132 outstanding ratings were approved in the Department during the calendar year 1952.

With the approval of the Civil Service Commission, the Department revised the rating appeals procedure to eliminate general elections for employee members of boards of review. Henceforth, such members will be named by the appellants. The number of appeals continues to be small, there having been only 10 administrative appeals and 3 appeals to boards of review filed in the calendar year 1952.

Fair Employment Practices

Prompt action was taken to reemphasize the Fair Employment Program. The record of the Department on this is excellent. Various mediums of communication such as USDA, the Employee Handbook, agency newsletters, staff meetings, training meetings, the administrative regulations, and Office of Personnel memoranda of instruction have been used to keep the employees informed about the program and to prevent cases of discrimination.

Designation of the Executive Assistant to the Secretary as the Department Fair Employment Officer evidenced the Secretary's interest and determination that the program should be vigorously administered in accordance with Executive Order 9980. All employees in the Department were advised of the designation.

This Office furnished recommendations to improve the administration of the program. They were substantially approved at the annual Fair Employment Board Meeting with Agency Fair Employment Officers.

Employee Council

The Council serves a useful purpose by providing employees with a direct medium of communication with management. Through it they can express their attitudes and opinions and make constructive suggestions impersonally and objectively with an assurance of sympathetic consideration at the departmental level.

The Council also provides management with an avenue of direct access to employees through which valued opinions and advice can be quickly given. It is one way in which employees are assured of participation in management activities.

Scheduled monthly meetings were conducted with assistance from this Office. The Council considered and made recommendations during the year on such matters as: Promotion and leave without pay policies; handling of charity drives; evaluation of performance rating system; improved communications between employees and management; functions and limitations of the Health Unit; transportation facilities for employees; reduction in force system; and hours of duty.

Correspondence Manual

Revision of the Department's Correspondence Style Manual was begun during the year. The stock of the 1949 issue is low and a revision is being made prior to ordering a new printing. The Manual serves two basic purposes: (1) It provides a system of "standard practice" to be followed in handling correspondence throughout the Department; and, (2) it serves as a guide in training new stenographers and others who prepare such correspondence. The great volume of correspondence that originates in the Department each day, together with the constant turnover of secretarial help, makes the Manual extremely useful.

USDA Clubs

The Office of Personnel continued to service the 84 USDA clubs throughout the country. These clubs are autonomous organizations composed of field employees from all local Department agencies. Since their organization in 1920, the clubs have provided a valuable service to the Department and to employees in local areas by aiding them to improve their service to the public. The purpose of the USDA clubs is to increase employees' understanding of the functions and relationships of agency programs and activities, and to promote a feeling that we are all working together as a team. This is effectively carried out through program meetings and special projects.

Club information is exchanged so that each club may keep up to date on what other clubs are doing. Suggestions for programs, speakers scheduled, and recommendations for projects to meet special needs or interests are provided to enable these groups to carry out their objectives.

The USDA Club Guide was revised this year to present a more current and effective explanation of the history, activities, organization, and administration of the clubs. This handbook is used in organizing new clubs and as a guide to the more effective administration of those already in operation. It also gives useful information to Washington officials and those who travel or speak at club meetings. During the coming year continuing emphasis will be laid upon the improvement of club programs to promote an even better public service.

United States Savings Bonds Program

In accordance with the expressed desire of the President and the Secretary of the Treasury, we have continued our efforts to maintain a favorable position among Government agencies in the purchase of United States savings bonds on the payroll savings plan. We followed up on your memorandum of March 30, 1953, to all USDA em-

ployees, by suggesting methods and furnishing promotional material to agency heads and bond coordinators. The Treasury Department cooperated by alerting their State and deputy State coordinators to contact our field offices and assist them in every possible way.

We will continue our efforts to keep both new and old employees currently informed of the opportunity to use the payroll savings plan.

Employee Health and Safety

Employee Health

During the past year a total of 23,745 calls for service were made at our Health Units in the Washington metropolitan area; 1,772 patients were seen by the medical officers, including 272 for pre-employment examinations and 29 for disability examinations. In addition to these figures, a considerable number of cases are referred to this Office for advice concerning the employability of applicants, disability retirements, fitness-for-duty determinations, and similar problems. Health problems revealed through preemployment or other examinations that are not disabling but which require medical advice are followed up on an individual basis. These cases require a great deal of time to work out satisfactory solutions. The total number of calls for service in the field was 6,511.

We cooperated with the U. S. Public Health Service and the District Health Service in making free chest X-rays available to our employees. As a result, about 6,500 employees received this service in the metropolitan area, Washington, D. C., 709 at the Research Center, and 613 at the Plant Industry Station in Beltsville, Md.

Cooperation with the American Red Cross resulted in donations of 1,341 pints of blood from employees of the Department in Washington, 321 pints from employees at the Research Center, and 164 pints from the Plant Industry Station. Continued emphasis will be placed on obtaining additional blood for military and civilian use.

We are continuing to cooperate with the Employee Health Unit at the Denver Federal Center operated by the U. S. Public Health Service. In addition to the service rendered employees at that Center, valuable information concerning the costs and benefits of employee health services is being accumulated.

Near the end of the year, we were informed that the Production and Marketing Administration in Atlanta, Ga., would not be able any longer to handle administrative details for the continuance of the nursing service there. Tentative arrangements have been made with the Forest Service to assume this responsibility.

The problem of the contamination of drinking water at the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory, Wyndmoor, Pa., reported last year, has been resolved. Studies made in cooperation with the U. S. Public Health Service and the State public health engineer of Pennsylvania did not reveal the specific source of the contamination. However, some general corrective measures were instituted which resulted in the contamination disappearing.

During fiscal year 1954, the major health work planned, in addition to that which was carried on in the past, will be furthering field health services and the development of physical standards for em-

ployment with particular emphasis on standards that will permit the employment of the physically handicapped. This program will require a great deal of time and it is probable that most physically handicapped individuals will require individual attention in placement.

Employee Safety

The Department's safety program continued on the same restricted basis as during the fiscal year 1952. However, preliminary reports from the Bureau of Employees' Compensation for the calendar year 1952 show that the Department continues to make steady progress in reducing the number of nonfatal injuries. However, fatal injuries of Department workers on duty, while fewer than in the previous year, still continue to occur with alarming frequency.

The safety program continues to receive excellent assistance from the USDA Safety Council and the Federal Safety Council. The USDA Safety Council, composed of representatives of each Department agency in Washington, has been very helpful in keeping up the interchange of safety information and the furnishing of assistance on technical problems. The Federal Safety Council, through its staff, publications and field councils, furnishes valuable assistance to both Washington and field staffs of the Department concerned with safety. There are now 93 field Federal Safety Councils located throughout the States and Territories.

Organization and Personnel Management

Review of Personnel Offices

In addition to carrying on reviews of major field offices having delegated personnel authorities, the central personnel office of each agency was reviewed this year. These reviews have resulted in better relationships and a mutual understanding of problems and objectives. This Office has continued its training program for reviewers; in addition, studies were made to determine the best possible means of coordinating our review activities with the regulatory compliance checks of the Civil Service Commission.

Special attention was directed during the year to compliance with the requirements of Civil Service Handbook S-812 which prescribes a uniform system of personnel records for all Federal agencies. To develop this so-called "package system," the Department was represented on a committee, set up under the leadership of the Bureau of the Budget and the Civil Service Commission a few years ago. Two years ago all agencies were directed to make arrangements to convert their records to the requirements of this system. To find out current practice in the Department, a survey was conducted, and it was found that there was a very high degree of compliance. Certain minor deviations were revealed during the survey and also during the civil service inspection. In all cases, corrective action was agreed to by the agencies. There are, however, a number of common problems in the matter of record keeping that this Office plans to discuss with the Civil Service Commission in order to obtain, if possible, an exception from certain of the "package system" requirements.

Incentive Awards

The Office of Personnel continued to give leadership and guidance to agencies in the administration and operation of all phases of the employee incentive awards programs—cash and efficiency awards, step increases for superior accomplishment, and honor awards. Step increases for superior accomplishment increased 37 percent over last year; honor award nominations submitted to the Department increased 12 percent; the number of cash awards for suggestions approved was approximately the same as for the previous year but the number of efficiency awards decreased 33 percent. The efficiency award program has been the least effective in the Department apparently because of legislative restrictions and mandatory centralized operations.

Several changes have been made at the departmental level in the procedure for handling efficiency and cash awards for suggestions; these changes should improve the operation of the programs. Further stimulus to cash awards for suggestions was brought about through the increased delegation of authority given by several agencies to their field offices. For example, Production and Marketing Administration area and commodity offices now take final action on all cash awards for suggestions up to and including amounts of \$50. Also, a number of counseling sessions were held with Department agencies to stress the importance of incentive programs as an effective adjunct to management improvement. Agency representatives were provided with data that reflected the total awards program of the Department. This gave them a basis for comparing their own programs with other agencies similar in size and in type of operation.

A significant action affecting this program was the recent appointment of a Departmental Efficiency Awards Committee with two members of the Office of Personnel staff serving as chairman and executive secretary. This committee was given responsibility for the general supervision of cash and efficiency awards programs, action on agency recommendations for such awards needing departmental approval, and the promotion of employee interest and participation in these programs. The appointment of this committee helped to reactivate some of the programs which were lagging. Furthermore, it is anticipated that this added stimulus and leadership will bring forth a continued increase in the various types of awards.

Organization

One of the most significant changes affecting the organization of the Department in many years took place with the announcement of a realignment of the Department's agencies under the leadership of group directors. Although this realignment did not immediately affect the internal organization of the various agencies, it is anticipated that the organization review activity of this Office will be considerably increased as changes in agency organization are determined. In the meantime, we have had the normal traffic with agencies in the processing of organization changes submitted for prior approval.

During the fiscal year, this Office reviewed 79 requests for organizational changes submitted by the various agencies for prior approval. Of this number 76 were approved. In performing this function, the Office extended a consultation service to the agencies of the Depart-

ment regarding improved methods of organizational adjustment. In addition, the Office served in a coordinating capacity by obtaining the views of interested staff and other agencies to determine that all proposals were in accord with the Secretary's policy before final approval.

Among the more significant changes in the Department's organization during the past year was a further clarification of the place of the area director in the administration of the Rural Electrification program. In the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, additional functions were assigned to the regions, some minor adjustments of the programs were effected by the regions, and the general functioning of the regional concept was improved during the year. The transfer of soil survey activities from the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering to the Soil Conservation Service and the movement in the opposite direction with respect to research functions necessitated organizational adjustments in both of these agencies. During the year the Bureau of Animal Industry submitted proposals to make its organizational structure more nearly like that of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering. The meat inspection function was the first one reviewed and brought in line with this concept of organization.

Staffing Requirements for Personnel Services

The Office coordinates the Department common service report for personnel services which accompanies the annual budget estimates. For the present the Bureau of the Budget has established a guide of 1 personnel worker for each 110 employees. We have assisted the agencies in working toward this guide and have made a more detailed study and analysis of the common service data than required by the Bureau of the Budget. Recently we participated in a work measurement project with the Federal Personnel Council. By these means we are attempting to arrive at a more understandable and workable procedure for establishing staffing standards for personnel work.

Attitude Surveys

Recently this Office became interested in a questionnaire developed by the Industrial Relations Center, University of Chicago, and used by Science Research Associates of Chicago in private industry. Upon learning that Science Research Associates were interested in adapting the questionnaire for use by Government employees, the Department undertook to collaborate with them on the development of a Government edition.

During the past fiscal year, employees in this Office and the Personnel Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry participated in a trial run of the revised questionnaire. The attitude score of these employees showed an excellent response in a positive manner; supervisors and employees get along well together; and the general morale rating was very high. Arrangements have been made for employees of the Northern Regional Research Laboratory, Bureau of Agricultural and Industrial Chemistry, Peoria, Ill., and the branch office of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation at Chicago to participate.

We believe that the opinion questionnaire can be developed into a valuable management tool as a device for ascertaining weak spots in

the Department's personnel management program. However, considerable work remains to be done to develop a suitable questionnaire for this purpose, to promote its use, and to acquaint operating officials with it.

Rules and Regulations

During the past fiscal year, 796 pages of instructions based on laws, executive orders, decisions, regulations and policies affecting personnel work were issued to Department agencies. This Office has continued the practice of incorporating suitable chapters of the Civil Service Commission's Federal Personnel Manual into the Department regulations. This has progressed to the extent that one-third of title 8 chapters are now integrated with the Manual to provide a common document of personnel instructions. The remaining chapters contain material for which the Department is solely responsible or for which the Commission is not the exclusive regulating authority. In addition, this Office continues to review simplified personnel operations of the various agencies; where applicable, those procedures adaptable for standard use throughout the Department are incorporated into the Department's Administrative Regulations.

This Office has made spot checks of agency manuals to observe adherence to Department policies and civil service requirements. At the recommendation of the Commission, an inventory will be made (1) of the extent to which Department agencies have developed or are developing their own manuals, (2) what purpose they serve, and (3) whether or not they duplicate or are in conflict with the Department's regulations or the Commission's Personnel Manual.

Classification

Classification Allocations

Allocations of individual positions during the year continued at about the same rate as previously with approximately 310 key positions being allocated by this Office. With few exceptions, these positions were at the level of GS-14 and GS-15, and represented key operating levels of Department activities. Other positions are allocated by the bureaus under delegated authority.

Continued attention was given to the necessity for increasing the number of supergrade positions needed to carry out effectively Departmental programs in general. In addition to regularly continuing interest in these top level positions, two special studies were completed during the year for the purpose of reappraising existing positions in grades 16, 17, and 18. These will serve as a basis for Budget Bureau and Civil Service Commission recommendations to Congress in removing the numerical limitations placed upon such positions in the Classification Act of 1949. The proposals did not result in any change in the basic legislation. However, modification of the limitations on supergrades is of such essential importance in the overall administration of the work programs of the Department that further efforts need to be made to obtain appropriate amendatory legislation. The extension of the Defense Production Act of 1951, which occurred at the end of the year, provided some relief in the top grade situation by continuing approximately 20 positions in GS-16, 17, and 18 in addi-

tion to the 46 positions allocated to these grades under the Classification Act. Threatened loss of the Defense Production Act positions served to emphasize the need for permanency and stability in the top grade structure of the Department. Some shifts in location and incumbency of the regular supergrade positions occurred during the year or were contemplated by the end of the year. These also emphasized the necessity for removing the restrictive limitations of the Classification Act so that program and policy changes can be more readily achieved.

The Civil Service Commission's postaudit program continued at about the same level of activity as in the previous year and covered representative agencies in the Washington area as well as field organizations of the Department. Authority delegated by the central office of the Commission to its regional offices for certification of postaudit actions necessitated more particular attention to negotiations with the Commission regional offices by agency personnel representatives in the field. Under this decentralization, only action by the field regional office of the Commission can effect central office review of individual adjustments which have impact nationally. This policy change by the Commission on certification authority provides recourse for the Department only through formal appeal action if the regional office does not agree to referral to the central office. The changeover appears to have been accomplished smoothly with the Commission's regional offices generally cooperating with the Department in referring such cases to the central office for review and final decision. Through negotiations and recommendations by the Department, the Commission now follows the policy of informal clearance of postaudit surveys with Department and agency representatives prior to preparing final reports and certification of individual cases. The new procedure provides an opportunity for effective negotiation, before final action is taken, during which differences can be resolved without the formality of report coverage or resort to time-consuming appeal procedure. This feature of operations has also made possible economy of time in report preparation by the Commission since negotiated cases are not covered in the Commission's reports.

As a result of a recommendation made by the Office of Personnel, the Civil Service Commission extended the certification date following postaudits from the beginning of the second pay period after postaudit certificates are received, to the beginning of the fourth pay period. This enables the Department to give at least 30 days notice to all employees affected by grade reductions under postaudits whereas heretofore it had been possible to give preference to veterans only under the provisions of the Veterans Preference Act.

The development of Schedule C authority, under a concept of identifying specific individual positions, required careful review and analysis of all top key positions in the Department to determine which positions involved policy formulation and development. Review and analysis of Schedule C recommendations by the Commission required considerable followup action in this Office before authority was granted to fill such positions noncompetitively.

Continued interest is being shown by other agencies, industries, and some of the colleges in the visual training materials on classification developed by the Office of Personnel several years ago. Seven requests were received during the year.

Classification Specifications

This Office worked with the Civil Service Commission during the year in the development of classification specifications for approximately eighteen series. Some of these were original series but the majority were revisions of published specifications. Since the Civil Service Commission has nearly completed its original coverage of positions in the Federal service, more emphasis is being placed on the revision of existing specifications to improve and realine them in the light of current conditions.

Until this year the revision program in the Department was on an emergency basis; i. e., as the need arose, projects were initiated and proposals were prepared and submitted to the Civil Service Commission for consideration and approval. However, it was determined that a broader approach would be necessary to carry out an effective specifications revision program because of the continued emphasis and the nature of the problems involved. Accordingly, a steering committee of bureau classification officers was established to work with the Office of Personnel in the development and operation of an active program. The steering committee is to make continuing studies to determine the needs of the various bureaus, establish priorities, and develop recommendations and proposals for the revision of existing series. The committee's time thus far has been devoted exclusively to the study of those series covering positions peculiar to the Department. From time to time, as federalwide specifications projects are initiated by the Civil Service Commission, the committee will participate in such undertakings. Working committees composed of operating personnel and subject-matter specialists have been established to revise specific subject-matter series.

This method of approach has not only created interest among administrators, operating people and subject-matter specialists, but has placed the specifications revision program on a continuing basis. It should result eventually in the development of improved guides for classifying positions in the Department, because it will assure sufficient time to resolve controversial problems which could not be resolved in the past because of the necessity for early publication.

Wage and Salary Administration

In the fall of 1952, this Office organized a series of meetings to discuss wage problems with the chairmen and members of active bureau and regional wage boards. The meetings were held in New Orleans, Denver, and Washington, and gave impetus to work on three major wage projects. One was the preparation of maps to identify areas in which prevailing wage surveys are made; another consisted of clarifying the issue of whether the Department might administratively classify trades and labor jobs for which prevailing wage determinations would otherwise have to be made; and the third was a complete revision of both the administrative regulations governing wage-rate setting and the Manual of Definitions for Wage Board Jobs.

Maps were completed identifying more than 900 counties in which wage surveys are made. It was planned to use the maps to eliminate duplicate surveys, encourage more uniform rate setting in common wage areas, and as a basis for streamlining wage survey techniques.

The question of whether the Department, at its discretion, might extend full Classification Act treatment to exempted trades and labor jobs was submitted to the Civil Service Commission for final determination. The reply received from the Commission was unfavorable. However, this Office succeeded in obtaining agreement that provisions exempting trades and labor jobs from the Classification Act, when amended in future, should permit discretionary use of Classification Act equivalent rates in those areas where, in the opinion of the employing agency, the number of employees affected was so small that prevailing wage determinations were impracticable. Bills were introduced late in the first session of the 83d Congress which would bring additional trades and labor jobs, including foremen and supervisors, under prevailing wage provisions. These bills contain a clause that would permit agencies to apply Classification Act rates administratively under the conditions mentioned.

Wage stabilization controls were terminated in February. This Office immediately reestablished wage policies and procedures that were in effect prior to application of the controls. We then began revising those policies and procedures and, at the same time, the manual that defines classes of jobs for which wage rates are set. The established policy of delegating authority to make as many final determinations as possible was followed in both revisions. It was necessary to proceed with the understanding, however, that under existing law authority could not be delegated for determining whether pay for recognized trades and labor classes should be fixed under the Classification Act or under the prevailing wage system. It was pointed out that prevailing rates would have to be paid for jobs that are definitely trades or labor jobs and Classification Act schedules would have to be applied to jobs that are not. In any case in which there was doubt as to coverage, a submission would be made to the Civil Service Commission requesting final determination.

Salaried employees were affected by relatively few changes in policy or procedures during the year. The Office revised the administrative regulations governing regular and longevity step increases in pay, the regulations on salary rates to be paid initially upon transfer, promotion, etc., and the rules on hours of duty, to incorporate minor modifications. A more significant revision was made in the regulations on pay scales. These were amended to incorporate for the first time the salary schedule for Point 4 personnel and rules requiring all other salaried personnel, with the exception of cooperatively controlled agents, to be paid administratively at Classification Act rates unless prior approval of the Director of Personnel was obtained for paying them on some other basis.

Although hearings were held to consider legislative proposals for improving overtime, holiday, and night pay provisions for salaried employees, no premium pay bills were enacted during the year. This increased the employee demands for certain improvements in areas where there is authority to fix premium rates administratively. A review of Department regulations governing inspectional overtime, begun in this connection, was actively under way at the end of the fiscal year.

Operating needs and the lack of adequate controls over decentralized wage and salary programs dictated projects that the Office hoped

to develop in the next 12-month period. As planned during the year, these projects included:

1. Establishment of a roster of positions in grade GS-14 and above, showing lineup by salaries, under functional and organizational titles, of all the positions in question throughout the Department. From such a roster, this Office would prepare once a year, or more often, if desired, a chart showing the relationships among these positions, based on function, organizational location, and grade. The establishment of a similar roster of consultant positions was also planned, which would show grade or pay and the authority under which incumbents were appointed and paid.

2. Surveys to determined problem areas and possible solutions for the problems in the field of hours of duty and premium pay.

3. Pilot studies (1) to determine relative cost of administering pay under the prevailing rate system as contrasted with the Classification Act system, and (2) to gather information on the cost of personal services where pay is fixed in accordance with local prevailing rates and where it is fixed under the nationwide schedules of the Classification Act for the purpose of comparing the two items.

4. Summaries of wage rates set by wage boards for selected classes of trades and labor jobs in common-wage areas.

Investigations

Types and Volume

The Office conducted investigations during fiscal year 1953 as follows:

1. Personnel investigations of alleged misconduct or delinquency on the part of the employees of the Department. These include fiscal irregularities, such as improper claims in travel vouchers, misuse of Government-owned vehicles, excessive use of intoxicants, and improper outside activities.

2. Suitability and preemployment investigations to ascertain the suitability of employees for retention in the service and to ascertain the suitability of applicants for employment. During fiscal year 1953, the Office made 65 suitability investigations and 12 preemployment investigations.

3. Program investigations to determine whether there have been violations of law or regulations or other irregularities in the action programs of the Department. (During the past year, four such investigations were conducted into the affairs of the cooperatives of the Rural Electrification Administration at the request of that agency.)

4. Security clearance investigations which are conducted for:

- a. Employees for whom the Department requests special passports for official foreign travel.

- b. Employees or nonemployees nominated by the Department to attend international conferences.

- c. Employees who are to have access to classified security material.

- d. Employees designated to serve on interdepartmental committees dealing with matters important to the national security.

The purpose of these latter investigations is to ascertain whether, from the standpoint of character, integrity, discretion, etc., the employee may safely be entrusted with information vital to the national defense. During the past year, 737 security clearance cases were processed. These consisted of the following: Foreign travel 49, attendance at international conferences, 44, and access to classified security material 644. Of the last category, 560 were full background investigations of employees requiring clearance for access to secret- and top-secret material. In addition, the Office reviewed and evaluated 411 Federal Bureau of Investigation reports of full field investigation of persons engaged in the International Development Program under Public Law 165, 82d Congress, commonly known as Point 4 program. In each case, a favorable or unfavorable recommendation was made to the Department of State with respect to employment under the Point 4 program.

Security Program

On April 27, 1953, the President issued Executive Order 10450 which established security requirements for Government employment, and revoked Executive Order 9835 which established the former loyalty program. Prior to the effective date of the changeover to the new program, this Office continued to serve the former Department Loyalty Board by performing its secretarial and clerical functions, maintaining the loyalty files, and acting as liaison between the Board, the Review Board, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the agencies of the Department, and the employees, in all loyalty matters. With the changeover, the Chief of the Division of Investigations was designated by the Secretary to serve as Department Personnel Security Officer. As such, he became responsible for evaluating derogatory information developed through the security investigations required by the Executive order, and for taking or initiating the required administrative action thereon. By agreement with the Civil Service Commission, the Division of Investigations also will conduct full field investigations of applicants for, or incumbents to be placed in "sensitive" positions. These functions will be in addition to the custodial, clerical, and liaison functions mentioned above, which the Office will continue to perform under the security program.

The Executive order also requires that any case in which a full field investigation was conducted under the former loyalty program be evaluated under the security standards of the current order. This will be a time-consuming and lengthy task because of the number of such cases.

During the fiscal year the Civil Service Commission sent to this Office 23 reports of full field investigation, and 6 supplemental reports which were processed under the former program. Nineteen cases were adjudicated which resulted in the issuance of eight interrogatories or letters of charges, all of which were prepared by this Office. One employee resigned after receipt of the interrogatory or charges, and two resigned or were separated for administrative reasons not bearing on their loyalty. One employee was removed following a hearing by a panel of the Loyalty Review Board and pursuant to its recommendation.

We also received reports of full field investigation by the FBI concerning 26 new appointees whose cases were adjudicated by the Civil Service Commission's Regional Loyalty Boards. These cases were reviewed to determine whether the Department should take preliminary action, such as reassignment or suspension, pending final adjudication of the case.

Veteran Appeals

This Office is continuing to represent the Department before the Civil Service Commission in appeals arising under section 14 of the Veterans Preference Act. This consists of preparation of the cases on appeal, and presentation of the evidence at the hearings. Five such appeals were filed during the past year at the regional level, and one further appeal was made to the Commission's Board of Appeals and Review. In each case the Department's action was sustained.

Disciplinary Actions

Disciplinary actions taken under delegated authority and post-audited by this Office remained at about the same level as in the preceding year. This Office postaudited 277 disciplinary cases which resulted in: 27 disciplinary suspensions, 31 removals for cause (delinquency or misconduct) of temporary employees or those serving probationary periods, 80 resignations of employees not in good standing and, 139 letters of reprimand.

This Office also reviewed and processed 379 disciplinary cases submitted for prior approval. One hundred and seventeen of these cases were disposed of without action and the remainder resulted in: 61 disciplinary suspensions, 11 removals for cause (delinquency or misconduct), 63 resignations of employees not in good standing and, 97 letters of reprimand.

In addition, the agencies were directed to terminate the services of 30 appointees, concerning whom derogatory information other than loyalty was disclosed by record checks and inquiries conducted by the Civil Service Commission under the loyalty program, or concerning whom derogatory information was obtained from other sources.

Employment

Examination Program

Boards of Examiners

The examination program has continued to receive emphasis through the Board of U. S. Civil Service Examiners for the Department of Agriculture and the nine field boards of examiners located throughout the United States. These boards have the responsibility and authority for conducting examining programs and maintaining registers for filling many types of positions which are peculiar to the work of the Department.

An employee of the Employment Division serves as Executive Secretary to the Central Board of Examiners. He works with the various agencies of the Department, the Central Board of Examiners, the field boards, and the Civil Service Commission in planning the examining program of the Department. At the present time there are 9 mem-

bers of the Central Board of Examiners and 6 employees. There are a total of 53 members in the 9 field boards and each of these boards has an executive secretary and clerical staff. Membership in both the central and field boards is maintained to be adequate and representative of the bureaus served.

Work was continued on the development of specifications for a number of positions not covered by examinations previously developed. As a result, current recruitment needs for filling vacancies in scientific, technical, and professional positions peculiar to the Department of Agriculture can be filled by the selection of well-qualified eligibles in a minimum of time. The various board members and those in the Office of Personnel concerned with this function are constantly striving to improve the examination and recruitment programs carried out through the Boards of Examiners. The establishment of registers is being done more expeditiously; improvements have been made in the types of tests given; and qualification standards are constantly being revised and improved.

Work is now being conducted on the revision of such examination specifications as agriculturist, executive officer, warehouse examiner, meat inspector, livestock inspector, virus-serum inspector, veterinarian (trainee) and others.

Student Aid Program

Under this program college students are employed during summer vacations in lines of work for which they are preparing themselves. The student has an opportunity to become acquainted with a phase of the work of the Department and to decide whether he is interested in working toward a career in that particular activity. The employing agency is able to observe the student during his summer employment and form an opinion as to whether he is adapted to the particular type of work and would have a reasonable chance of success in a career with the agency. Upon completion of their college education, the students who have made the best records during their summer employments are selected for permanent appointments. This program creates a pool of well-trained young college graduates who are adapted to the work for which chosen and who have decided on a career in the Government service. At the present time this program is being used in the fields of soil conservation, range conservation, soil science, agricultural engineering, and veterinary medicine. We are now working on a project to extend this program to the field of entomology and anticipate that the first employments under that phase of the program will be made in the summer of 1954.

Junior Agricultural Assistant Examination

Work is now in progress on the review of qualification standards looking toward the annual announcement of the Junior Agricultural Assistant examination. Some of the standards will be revised and other standards may be developed for 1 or 2 options.

Considerable work is being done in cooperation with the Civil Service Commission on the gathering of basic data with which to evaluate the results of selection methods used in the Junior Agricultural Assistant examination. A plan has been developed for an extensive testing program through the land-grant colleges over a minimum 5-year

period. It will provide valuable information upon which to base further revisions and refinements in this very important examination. The first steps in the project are expected to be taken early in 1954.

Recruitment

Recruitment Information

The Department completed a revision of its main recruitment pamphlet "Career Service Opportunities in the United States Department of Agriculture." This pamphlet was distributed to all land-grant colleges and other educational institutions and to many libraries throughout this and foreign countries. The pamphlet fulfills a need for one source of information on the various activities of the Department, the type of jobs within each activity, and the manner of becoming eligible for appointment to positions in the Department.

Long Range Recruitment

Guides for the development of long-range recruitment programs were developed and issued to agencies of the Department. Negotiations were held with various bureaus in the development of their long-range plans and eight such plans were prepared and reviewed in this Office. Continued emphasis will be given to this project.

Applicant Correspondence

A study was begun to simplify responses to applicant correspondence by expediting replies and to permit maximum utilization of the personnel involved. This project will not be actively pursued until a decision can be reached on the relationship between the new booklet, "The Way to a Job in Government," and applicant correspondence.

Central Applicant Interview and Referral Service

The central applicant interview and referral service continued to be active. This service resulted in the referral of a considerable number of employees in shortage categories to the various bureaus for placement. Because of the economy moves throughout the Government during the first half of 1953, an increasing number of well qualified applicants indicated an interest in working for the Department. As a result, the general caliber of the qualifications of those referred to the bureaus was improved. It is expected that the quality of candidates will continue to improve simultaneously with a decrease in the number of vacancies to be filled. Therefore, progressively thorough screening will be practiced through the central interview and referral process.

In order to provide the Office of the Secretary with a ready reference file on qualifications of selected applicants, it was necessary to establish and maintain a system for classifying and analyzing qualifications for crossfiling.

Special Recruitment Authorities

Assistance was rendered agencies in the solution of employment problems through the negotiation for special authorities under Schedule A of the civil-service rules and through the analysis of rules relating thereto. An analysis was made of all Schedule A positions, the status of incumbents of such positions, and the laws, regulations and policies applicable to the separation of incumbents of such posi-

tions for the purpose of clarification where replacement may be proposed.

Roster of Agriculturists

This Office has continued to maintain a Roster of Agriculturists which, at the end of fiscal year 1953, included the names of more than 3,000 technically qualified persons in various fields of agricultural science who are considered eligible for possible overseas assignment under the Technical Assistance Program. The roster is used principally by the Foreign Agricultural Service in this Department and is also used by other Federal agencies and international organizations engaged in technical-assistance programs for the recruitment of technically trained agriculturists. The greatest number of appointments from the roster were in the fields of extension and vocational-education training, agronomy, animal husbandry, and entomology. There was also a considerable demand for agricultural engineers which could not be fully met since there is a definite shortage of qualified candidates.

Placement and Career Programs

Standards for Agency Programs

We continued to provide guidance and assistance to agencies in developing agency career programs based on Civil Service Commission standards and Department principles. In the past year, new programs were reviewed and approved, and several agencies were assisted in revising approved programs to conform with organizational changes and additional requirements of the Civil Service Commission.

Promotion Roster

The roster of employees eligible for promotion and transfer across agency lines has been maintained for use of the agencies. There are about 400 applications in this roster. The value of this roster is being considered in connection with a study of an overall promotion plan for the Department.

Preclearance on Outside Recruitment

Our program of reviewing agency requests to fill vacancies from outside the Department has continued. As a result of these reviews, satisfactory placements from within the Department have been made in some cases. The extent to which agencies voluntarily attempt to fill vacancies from within because of our preclearance requirements is not known, but these requirements are believed to have more than a salutary effect. This program will receive very close attention during our current and pending retrenchment program.

Inter- and Intra-Departmental Placement Committees

The Office has actively participated in the Inter-Departmental Placement Program of the Civil Service Commission. Interagency information has been helpful in keeping us aware of significant agency needs or surpluses. The outlet provided through this program may prove beneficial in the forthcoming reductions in force in the Department.

As a follow-up to the above committee activities, this Office sponsored the organization of the Intra-Departmental Placement Committee of the Employment Council. It is expected that the functions of this Committee will serve a particularly useful purpose in any substantial reduction-in-force program.

Executive Development

Work has continued with respect to the executive development program of the agencies and of the Department. We assisted two agencies in the past year in formulating their executive-development programs and have continued our efforts to improve the programs by endeavoring to modify our agreement with the Civil Service Commission.

Special Problems

Reduction in Force

The reduction in force which occurred in the spring of 1953 resulted in a workload of approximately 250 cases for departmentwide monitoring with respect to reassignment. In a period of six weeks each case was reviewed for qualifications and considered for placement; placement was then effected or the case cleared because of no suitable position to which the employee was entitled to reassignment. Of the cases which were finally departmentwide placement responsibilities, i. e., those whose notices were not rescinded at a later date or who did not resign or retire (a total of 192), 61 or 32 percent were offered placement in other positions through our efforts. During this period much time was spent in counseling the employees affected by reduction-in-force action with respect to their rights, their placement possibilities, and other aspects of reduction in force. In addition, a system of preclearance was administered so that the filling of any vacancy in the Washington area was made subject to the consideration of any qualified employee on reduction-in-force notice.

To simplify the reduction-in-force procedure, the Civil Service Commission issued new regulations reducing the number of retention groups and subgroups. There are now three such main groups—group I for career employees, group II for career-conditional employees, and group III for indefinite employees. Each group contains two subgroups—subgroup A for veterans and subgroup B for nonveterans. In addition, other changes included modifications of “competitive level” and “reassignment rights” of qualified career and career-conditional employees.

Whitten Requirements

The revision of the Whitten Amendment which occurred in 1952 provided for permanent appointments under certain conditions. Standards and guides were established to govern the according of permanent tenure in the various grades. A system to provide for the exchange of surplus permanent positions among agencies was established and resulted in the exchange of approximately 800 positions.

The application of the Whitten Amendment to positions in the excepted service, as a responsibility of the Department, required the establishment of policies and procedures for its administration. The

uncertainty as to the meaning and effect of the Whitten Amendment has resulted in a large volume of questions and interpretations to meet agency operating needs.

Employment Policy Development

Based on laws, civil-service regulations, decisions of the Comptroller General, executive orders, and administrative decisions, it was necessary to amend or originate departmental policy and regulations with respect to many employment matters. The new leave act, revision of the retention preference regulations, and the Whitten Amendment, were responsible for the majority of issuances of policy and regulations. In addition, the legal implications of contract employment were studied and regulations governing this type of employment were issued.

Employment Reports

Recurring employment reports, such as the Report of Federal Civilian Employment, were reviewed, corrected, and summarized for submission to the requesting agencies. In addition, many special employment reports were prepared. During the past year, two of the most voluminous and extensive reports—in relation to time allotted for preparation—were prepared. One covered all positions in the excepted service by specific locations and by salary rates; the other covered all positions, competitive and excepted, by salary distribution as to steps in the grade, wage board rates, and unallocated rates. From this latter report another extensive report was made to determine the average salary for all employees of the Department; this was required to be submitted to congressional committees under provisions of section 1310 (d) of the Whitten Amendment.

In addition to the preparation of statistical employment reports, considerable time was spent developing and presenting viewpoints and recommendations with respect to the Federalwide civil-service system and needed legislation relevant thereto as requested by the House Committee on Civil Service and Post Office.

Selected Activities Reported by Agencies

Foreign Agricultural Service

Point 4 Program of Technical Cooperation

The new program of technical cooperation in knowledges and skills between the peoples of the United States and those of other nations has confronted personnel administrators and technicians with new elements of interdepartmental and international personnel administration. The Department faces a practical challenge in this new administrative experiment because we have one of the largest representations abroad of the technical agencies participating in the implementation of the Point 4 program. At present there are more than 300 Department technicians on the rolls of the Foreign Agricultural Service; these employees are serving at foreign field posts in 27 cooperating countries of the Near East and Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and among the American Republics. At the end of fiscal year

1952, the Department had only 146 technicians abroad; during fiscal year 1953 this staff was increased by 165 technicians, excluding some 10 replacements.

Where did the Department recruit so many technicians in the face of full employment opportunities here at home, discouraging political situations and living conditions abroad, and self-imposed rigid overseas appointment standards? Analysis of the statistics reveals that of the 311 Department Point 4 employees now abroad, 122 of them were recruited from the land-grant college and university system, including the Extension Service and experiment station systems; 84 were recruited from organizations of the Department, including 13 from the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine; 26 of them came from other departments and agencies of the Government; and the balance of 79 were recruited from miscellaneous sources.

The Department has not only furnished leadership in producing eligible agriculturists for service overseas but also is 1 among 10 departments and agencies of the Government participating in management of the overall Point 4 program. Although there has been a high mortality rate of interdepartmental committees by reason of jurisdictional conflicts, interdepartmental differences have always found common ground in the urgency of carrying out a vital foreign policy of the United States. Personnel administrators and technicians of the participating agencies have been forced to examine their overseas personnel policies, practices, and standards. The new program has fostered an interdepartmental exchange of knowledges and skills on the problem of coordinated administrative planning, execution, and control, and has promoted interdepartmental understanding of the need for more uniformity in administration of the classification, qualification, compensation, and allowance aspects of the overseas personnel programs. We are continuing our work with other agencies for further improvements in these matters.

Soil Conservation Service

Foreign Assistance Program

The responsibility for those aspects of the foreign program which have to do primarily with the training of foreign nationals has now been transferred to the Personnel Division as one of the functions of the program for training for Government service.

Programs were made for 60 persons from 30 countries to spend from 3 to 6 months with the Soil Conservation Service in the field. Eight foreign nationals were trained at the Coshocton, Ohio, Training Center and 18 persons were trained in the Puerto Rico Cooperative Training Center. Twelve groups comprising approximately 200 persons received instruction for 1 to 5 days in soil conservation methods in the Washington office.

The Service continues to provide technical specialists in soil conservation to foreign nations under the Point 4 program. At the present time there are 28 former Soil Conservation Service technical men working with others in 21 countries to teach methods of soil and water conservation.

Classification

The Service is continuing its educational program on the principles of position classification. The success of this program is indicated by a recent Civil Service Commission classification postaudit report which states: "Supervisors and employees of the Soil Conservation Service exhibited an exceptionally good understanding of what classification is all about. This is particularly remarkable in view of the widely scattered operation, and the relatively infrequent personal contacts with the personnel office."

Student Trainees

A special study of our Student Trainee Program during the past fiscal year indicates that this method of recruitment and training has proved to be a highly successful program. The study covering the 5-year period of 1948-52 inclusive showed that 65 percent of the trainees are still on our rolls.

Management Improvement Program

In order to stimulate interest in the management improvement program of the Service, the Personnel Division has collaborated with the Information Division in developing a filmograph movie entitled "Management Improvement in the Soil Conservation Service," which will be shown to all employees. Basically, it is an appeal to employees to simplify their working procedures and recommend better methods of doing their work.

Safety

A high standard of safety is being maintained in all operations. During the fiscal year, Soil Conservation Service experienced 4.42 lost-time injuries per million man-hours worked. The motor vehicle accident rate for the fiscal year was 0.35 motor vehicle accidents per 100,000 miles driven.

Bureau of Animal Industry

Study of Veterinary Positions

One of the major problems that has confronted the Bureau of Animal Industry for a number of years is the recruitment and retention of sufficient veterinary personnel to meet program needs. In a further effort to alleviate this problem, an extensive classification study was conducted during the past fiscal year, in cooperation with the Office of Personnel and the U. S. Civil Service Commission, with a view to obtaining authority to place a number of our veterinary positions in higher classification grades. As a result of that study, the Civil Service Commission has agreed (1) that grade GS-7 will be strictly a trainee grade for veterinary positions; (2) that after a short (probably 6 months) orientation period, veterinarians in grade GS-7 automatically will go to grade GS-9 on the basis of independent regulatory action involving veterinary medical judgment; and (3) that the class specifications for the veterinary meat inspector series, the veterinary virus-serum series, and the veterinary disease control series will be liberalized in the upper grades to permit a better promotion ladder to grades GS-11 and GS-12, and to some extent to the grade GS-13 level.

Student Trainees

The program for the summer employment of students attending veterinary colleges was continued during the year and 25 students, who completed their junior year in veterinary medicine, were hired as GS-5 trainees. This is a much smaller number than last year and the decrease is attributable to the shortage of funds available for this purpose. The program enables the Bureau to accomplish a larger volume of work during the summer months and has aided efforts to recruit veterinarians.

Agricultural Research Center

Employment

The recruitment of skilled mechanics has been a problem through most of the year. Painters were particularly difficult to recruit locally and were finally secured through the U. S. Employment Service office in Baltimore; most of the carpenters were recruited through the U. S. Employment office in Washington; and some recruitment of laborers and farm laborers was made through the local U. S. Employment Service office at Hyattsville, Md., during March and April 1953.

Safety

The value of the safety educational program was reflected in a reduction of more than 50 percent in the frequency rate. There has been considerable change in the general attitude of supervisors toward the implementation of the safety program. This has resulted in a greater degree of safety consciousness among the rank and file employees, particularly the permanent personnel. The educational program is continuing with greater emphasis on contacts with the individual employee and the use of films, bulletins, talks, and literature. A new approach has recently been taken with the erection of a large billboard near the main entrance of the Center. By means of a changeable wording arrangement on the sign, slogans and announcements pertinent to the fire and safety program are displayed.

Training

To develop further a training program and improve employee relations, each section supervisor was furnished with an outline of an employee relations and training program to be placed in his book, Guide Posts for Supervisors. One hour each month has been devoted to group training for section and shop supervisors and, in addition, approximately one-half hour of the regular monthly meeting of supervisors has been used to supplement the training program. Also, several training meetings have been held at the Agricultural Research Center shops. Subjects discussed at these meetings included: Leave, safety, payroll-savings plan, performance ratings, manpower utilization, materials, equipment, protection of Federal property, and many others. At one session there was a brief quiz dealing with various phases of personnel work and regulations so that management might find out how much the supervisors as a group knew about personnel problems. Several films were shown at supervisors' meetings during the year.

Awards Program

An honor awards ceremony was held at the Agricultural Research Center on May 26, 1953, at 2:30 p. m. The principal address was given by J. Earl Coke, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. Chiefs of Agricultural Research Administration bureaus, the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, and representatives of the Production and Marketing Service were present and made the awards to their respective employees.

Production and Marketing Administration

Reduction in Force

Total employment in the Production and Marketing Administration was reduced during the fiscal year from 11,107 to 10,728—a reduction of 379 employees. In the Washington metropolitan area, the reduction was from 2,449 to 2,168, a total of 281 employees. A large percentage of this decrease in employment was the result of reduction in force. In Washington more than 250 positions were declared surplus, resulting in actions on more than 400 employees. Of this number, 153 were separations, 91 were demotions, and the remainder were retirements, reassignments, and transfers.

A member of the staff of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee made numerous contacts and requests for factual reports for use in consideration of proposed legislation with respect to reduction-in-force procedures.

Training

In addition to regular training activities and as an outgrowth of the Production and Marketing Administration's Supervisory and Executive Development Program, two pilot courses for training junior executives were completed in March. As expected, these grade 9 and 11 supervisors did not rank as high in supervisory judgment and knowledge in the beginning of the 15-session course as had officials in grades 13 to 15. At the end of the training, however, their increase over the initial scores was 16 percent. Higher grades usually show a 5 to 8 percent increase in the elements measured. As practiced in the higher grade groups, the trainees were selected from across organizational lines and represented all parts of the Production and Marketing Administration in Washington. Each group was composed of 16 supervisors. The training involved communications (speaking, writing, staff conference), program planning, working relations, and unit organization. Practice problems and experience situations constituted the main training techniques. Course completion required 22 hours of group activity and about 30 hours of individual preparation.

Honor Awards

A number of steps were taken during the year to obtain greater interest and participation in the honor awards programs.

1. A subcommittee was established for concentration on accomplishments involving research work. It was composed of research personnel and their orientation was most helpful in carrying the message back to their own and other research divisions. A special memoran-

dum was issued by the Assistant Administrator for Marketing and as a result there was an increase in the number of nominations for awards in the research field.

2. The Administrator devoted a portion of his staff meeting to discussing the honor awards program, and also issued a special notice to all employees.

3. A poster was developed and displayed in offices throughout Washington and the field. This was the first time a poster had been used to promote the Production and Marketing Administration honor awards program.

4. A subcommittee was established for concentration on accomplishments involving administrative and program work. The subcommittee was able to identify certain accomplishments for which nominations had not been received. They brought these cases to the attention of the appropriate offices and recommended consideration.

5. Informal awards committees were established at the five main headquarter cities in the field. These committees met and furnished names of persons and units which in their opinions had performed outstanding jobs. The names of the persons and units received from these informal committees were referred to the appropriate offices for attention.

6. Special meetings were held by the Awards Committee in the Office of the Administrator to consider the achievements of the top officials who would normally be overlooked for such attention.

7. A special meeting was held with the area directors to give consideration to State office personnel.

8. A new method of initiating nominations was tried in one of the branch committees. It required only an oral presentation by the nominator. The committee considered the oral nomination and, if favorable action was taken, a summary of the nomination was prepared by the committee.

As the result of these actions, the Production and Marketing Administration had an extraordinary response. Seventy-seven nominations were received, representing an increase of more than 150 percent over the previous year. After screening by the Administration committees and the Department boards, nearly 25 percent of these cases received final approval for the Department honor award. A much larger percentage were rewarded with certificates of merit and salary increases for superior accomplishment.

County Offices

Since the establishment of Production and Marketing Administration county offices there has been little uniformity in county office personnel practices. Valid reasons existed for permitting some flexibility, especially in salary schedules. However, recent developments such as budgetary considerations and the Secretary's decision to appoint county office managers, made it necessary that national patterns be installed.

Accordingly, uniform grades, qualification standards, salary schedules, and applications for employment were developed in collaboration with State office representatives. These will be used by all county offices in the selection and reimbursement of full-time employees. Suggestions were also made to facilitate conversion to the new system

and to aid in the selection of new county office managers. The county committees will retain their policymaking responsibilities and be able to devote more attention to important matters.

These actions should increase the effectiveness of program operations, increase employee morale, and assure more competent employees without a corresponding increase in administrative expenses.

Rural Electrification Administration

Utilization of Manpower

In view of the acceleration of the telephone loans program during the past year, a large number of experienced employees from the electric program were reassigned to the telephone program. Of particular significance was the utilization of 51 engineers experienced in the electric program who were reassigned as telephone engineers to the telephone program.

Training programs were developed for loan examiners and telephone engineers. The telephone engineers were given instruction covering many specialized phases of rural telephony by recognized specialists in their fields. The results have been gratifying and have helped overcome the recruitment problem of a short supply of experienced telephone engineers. The utilization of electric program experience also has proved beneficial to the execution of the telephone program.

Supervisory Training

In view of the supervisor's key position in effective manpower utilization, REA conducted the second in its series of supervisory training programs. This program, which was attended by 24 supervisors at grades GS-12 and above, consisted of seven 2-hour sessions relating to the various aspects of supervisory responsibilities. Moderators from outside the group served as discussion leaders, but the actual presentations were made by the supervisors themselves.

Telephone Engineer Trainee Program

The Civil Service Commission approved an organized Rural Electrification Administration telephone engineer trainee program of 6 months duration. The primary objective of the program is to develop the ability of recent electrical engineering graduates to work in the Rural Electrification Administration telephone program with maximum efficiency at the earliest possible date after employment. This training course is expected to be highly beneficial since very few colleges and universities provide specialized courses in telephony and general recruitment in the field is difficult. The course combines group instruction by Administration specialists with on-the-job training and specific work assignments. It is similar in pattern to training programs conducted by private industry.

Commodity Exchange Authority

Employee Morale Questionnaire

In the latter part of the 1952 fiscal year a questionnaire was designed to learn employees' reactions to their working conditions, job

security, prospects for advancement, management, and related matters; this was distributed to all employees in the agency. The replies, none of which were identified, were carefully analyzed. Generally speaking, the response of the employees was highly satisfactory to the management of CEA. Responses to such questions as those relating to supervisor-employee reactions, competence of supervision, effectiveness of administration, and identification with the agency, were remarkably favorable. On the other hand, there were a number of critical reactions, particularly those relating to the failure of the agency to keep the employees informed of administrative plans and developments, work relations, and pay.

These items were carefully reviewed for the benefit of field supervisors and division chiefs and suggestions were made relative to their improvement. A general letter was sent to all employees thanking them for their response to the questionnaire and assuring them that steps would be taken to correct inequities and improve administration. The general results from the application of this questionnaire to the Commodity Exchange Authority were very satisfactory.

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

Executive Development

An Executive Development Agreement was approved by the Office of Personnel for the Corporation during the past fiscal year. The approval of this agreement gave the Corporation authority to plan systematic career development programs for the most effective placement of employees and to establish and maintain a reserve of career executives to meet program development needs.

Under the agreement, the Personnel Section prepared an Executive Development Training Plan for the Corporation's Budget Officer position. The plan was put into effect and an employee of the Corporation, after completing the training period which lasted 7 months, was assigned to the Budget Officer position. By this means, the Corporation was able to use an employee who already had an excellent crop-insurance-program background in the detailed phases of budget work.

Organization

Members of the personnel staff collaborated with management officials in a reorganization and consolidation of the Corporation's State offices. Since approval of this plan was granted by the Secretary, six have been closed. Upon completion of the consolidation of the State offices during the first 6 months of the 1954 fiscal year, the number will be reduced from 33 to 16.

Farmers Home Administration

Movement of Area Finance Office

In June 1952 the Area Finance Office at Indianapolis moved to St. Louis. This involved approximately 150 positions. Less than one-third of the Indianapolis staff accepted permanent transfer to St.

Louis. As a result, a major recruitment and training program was carried out during June and the first several months of the 1953 fiscal year. Those employees who did not transfer to St. Louis were assisted in finding suitable jobs in Indianapolis. Practically everyone was placed.

The area finance manager and his staff planned the move. The chief fiscal officer and his staff in Washington, other area finance offices and other divisions sent key personnel to St. Louis to assist in operations and training. Much service was rendered by the St. Louis Civil Service Commission office. In a relatively short period the new staff was functioning smoothly—an example of good planning and teamwork within the Farmers Home Administration organization. All this was accomplished without the delay of a single paycheck or the impairment of services rendered to administration offices and borrowers in an area covering 19 States.

Incentive Awards

During the 1953 fiscal year continued emphasis was placed on incentive-awards activities. In the past very little use was made of the superior accomplishment step increase as a means of rewarding employees whose performance merited special commendation. In 1953, however, 28 such awards were granted: 18 employees received step increases in salary; and 10 certificates of merit were given to those who were already at the top salary rate for their grades.

Increased participation in the honor awards program was also attained. More nominations for superior service awards were received than in any previous year and the 19 approvals for such awards established a new record. Several new types of positions were represented among the recipients and selections were made from four employment jurisdictions not previously represented.

Promotional activities on honor awards included the development of an inexpensive series of color slides (total cost \$35) which were shown to employee groups in all employment jurisdictions. Work has been started on the further development of this approach toward promoting more widespread participation in the honor awards program.

There was a substantial increase over last year in the number of suggestions adopted, the number and amount of cash awards, and the estimated savings. The estimated savings in man-hours and materials more than doubled the amount saved during the previous year.

Retirement Counseling

The number of retirements increased sharply over the previous year. Seventy-one employees retired (annuity and disability) in 1953 compared to 42 retirements in 1952. The number of inquiries from employees concerning retirement matters increased also. This was not unanticipated, however, as an analysis of employment records indicated an increase in the percentage of employees approaching or reaching retirement age.

In 1953, therefore, as a result of these facts, several positive steps were taken to strengthen the entire retirement program. Considerable information on retirement in general was distributed to supervisors and employees and their attention was drawn to information already available. State directors, area finance managers, administrative officers and personnel clerks in most field offices received valuable train-

ing in retirement counseling and processing through instruction and advice from the Washington office on individual cases. Field office supervisors and personnel clerks were urged to provide an increasing amount of information and to advise employees and supervisors more fully on all phases of the retirement program. These efforts did much to prepare employees and their supervisors to discuss more adequately the whole subject of retirement.

Personnel Instructions Study

It is the policy of the Farmers Home Administration not to duplicate in **FHA** Personnel Instructions any material contained in the Federal Personnel Manual or Administrative Regulations, Title 8, except in special situations. Nevertheless, over the past several years it has been necessary to prepare a considerable volume of agency personnel instructions.

In 1953 a special committee reviewed thoroughly all Farmers Home Administration Personnel Instructions. The specific purpose of the project was to eliminate, consolidate, and clarify agency instructions wherever possible. As a result, 20.2 percent of the total volume was declared obsolete and withdrawn, about 8 percent was consolidated, and the remaining instructions were simplified through editing. While all the rewrites have not been completed, this project should result in much clearer instructions, better understanding, and a considerable saving in time and effort of employment officers, administrative officers, and personnel clerks throughout the entire agency.

Forest Service

Employee Welfare and Training Aids

During the fiscal year, the Forest Service developed some valuable guides and instructions directed toward improving employees' efficiency and productiveness, as well as their health and physical well-being. This material released for use of employees includes:

1. A Safety Code which outlines in textual and graphic form the safest, easiest, and most effective way of accomplishing the wide variety of hazardous tasks which must be performed in connection with firefighting and other activities.

2. A Training Manual for employees with supervisory and administrative duties which provides material to assist them in the planning and execution of on-the-job training for employees under their supervision.

3. An Employee Health Program, developed with the advice and assistance of the head of the Department's Division of Employee Health, not yet available in final form, which will set forth policies and regulations pertaining to medical examinations and sanitary requirements, as well as suggestions on physical conditioning, insurance, and other measures designed to make employees more health conscious.



